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The Influence of Longinus
in the Seventeenth Century

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THE INFLUENCE OF LONGINUS IN THE
SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

BY

FRANCES MARJORIE KILBURN

A. B. Rockford College 1911

THESIS

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the

Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

IN ENGLISH

IN

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

OF THE

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

1912

1912
K55

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

June 1, 1912

I HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER MY SUPERVISION BY

Frances Marjorie Kilburn
ENTITLED The Influence of Longinus in the Seventeenth Century

BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING THIS PART OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE

DEGREE OF Master of Arts
H. E. Paul

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Recommendation concurred in:

} Committee
on
Final Examination

INTRODUCTION, AND GENERAL SURVEY OF
LONGINUS'S TREATISE ON THE SUBLIME.

It would be to the credit of modern scholarship if no introduction to the Treatise of Longinus were necessary, but unfortunately today the Essay on the Sublime is much less widely known than its worth deserves. The average college student knows little or nothing of the Treatise, and is more than likely to receive any reference to Longinus with the skeptical indifference that would imply, if politeness permitted, "Ah yes, perhaps somewhere back in the archives of time such an old fellow did really exist, but I'm sure he is not worth my interest". As a matter of fact, the archives of time have nothing to do with Longinus and his Treatise on the Sublime. He exists as fully today, through the universality of his work, as he did in his own century. His truths are not for one age but for all time, and perhaps the peculiar history of his book may only be another proof of the deathless genius of the man. Be this as it may, the Treatise has had a remarkable career. Not only is exact knowledge wanting as to when it was written, but there have also been numerous conjectures as to whom the author really was. In 1808, Weiske,* while preparing his edition, was informed by Jerome Amati, librarian of the Vatican, that there was some doubt as to whether Cassius Longinus was the author of the Treatise. This doubt was the result of the discovery that on one manuscript the authorship was attributed to Dionysius, or Longinus, the Greek letter η appearing between the two names. This led to a vast amount of discussion, which was continued during the last century

* For an account of Weiske, see Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie, Leipsic, 1889. vol. 41, 551.

which has of late somewhat died out.

It is a question which must remain open, but the greater probability seems to lie on the side of those who accept Cassius Longinus, of the third century A.D., as the author. This man was a great scholar and critic, who received and well deserved the admiration and homage of his contemporaries. He was referred to by them as the greatest critic of his age, and indeed, of all antiquity. Though the exact date and place of his birth are unknown; it was probably about 213 A.D. in the city of Emesa, Syria. He traveled and met many illustrious people, studied in Alexandria, and perhaps visited Rome. Later, having returned to the East, he became a famous teacher of rhetoric and philosophy, coming into the inheritance of his Uncle, the renowned scholar Phronto. He appears to have been one of the foremost men of his day, and gained an extensive reputation both in the world of letters and of affairs. Eunapius, the biographer of one of his brilliant pupils, Porphyry, gives a vivid account of him.

"Longinus", he says, "was a kind of living library and walking museum, and had been appointed to give critical instruction on classical literature..... With him Porphyry received the very perfection of training, like his master, the summit of excellence in philology and rhetoric....For in all such studies Longinus was by far the most distinguished of all the men of those times....No unfavorable judgment on any classical writer was allowed to hold good before Longinus had given his opinion, but his opinion when given was without appeal".

The great rhetorician later became the confident and adviser of Zenobia, the ambitious and unprincipled queen of Palmyra, who

having become involved in difficulties from which she could not extricate herself, betrayed him. It is said that he died in a way that well became the high serenity of his nature, and at the last paid his final tribute to that elevation and sublimity of soul, that had been through life, his great ideal.

Longinus was the author of many works, most of which have perished. The Treatise on the Sublime existed in manuscript form until 1554, when it was printed by Robortello, but unfortunately more than a third of it had been lost. It stands as the last literary criticism in Greek, and it is interesting to note that the first critical treatise in English, Wilson's Art of Rhetoric, was published only a year before the reappearance of the Sublime. Longinus's Treatise seems to have had little or no effect upon English writers however, as no mention of it is made in Elizabethan literature, nor even up to a later time. The first edition appeared in England in 1636, edited by G. Langbain. The first English translation was by John Hall* in 1562. This translation, while not wholly accurate, was said to be free and vigorous; its popularity, however, could not have been great as no reference is made to it by contemporary writers. Two other English translations appeared during the 17th century, one by J. Pulteney in 1680 and an anonymous Oxford translation in 1698.

*John Hall, poet and medical writer, was born in 1529 and died in 1566. His works are numerous, and concerned for the most part with either religion or medicine. Hall boldly denounces the quacks of the day, and protests against magic, divination, and physic. (National Biography vol. VIII. p. 953.)

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By far the most important contribution made, however, was the translation by Boileau in 1674. Seven editions of this book appeared before 1700, and over a dozen more in the following century. In all, the Treatise was translated into twelve different languages: Latin, Italian, French, Spanish, Portuguese, English, German, Dutch, Swedish, Polish, Russian, and modern Greek; but nowhere else did it attain the popularity that it gained in France through Boileau's translation. Its influence on French critics was tremendous. St. Evremand, La Bruyere, Rapin, Le Bossu, Bonhours, and many others frankly admitted their esteem for the Treatise. Fenelon preferred Longinus to Aristotle, and Rollin would have made the Treatise a text book. He speaks of it as that "admirable traite" which is "seul capable de former le gout des jeunes gens"¹.

During these years the influence of French critics was strong upon English writers. The men who appreciated poetry and the stage were, for the most part, those who had spent years of exile in France. As a consequence, they approved of French criticism and French drama, and threw the weight of their influence for French principles.

In England, the dominating tendencies were not such as would be favorable to the reception of Longinus's Treatise on the Sublime. The reign of Charles II was an age of criticism rather than of creation, of perfection of literary form rather than of originality of thought. Not only was French influence directed against the poetic license of the preceding age, but it was effect-

¹De Maniere d' Enseigner et d' Etudier les Belles Letters, Paris, n. d., vol. II. p. 69.

ing the general trend of the drama toward greater reserve and decency. The comedies of the Restoration were a reflection of the times; they were witty, immoral, and based, for the most part upon love intrigues that dwelt with the manners and fashions of the day.* It was an age of realism, and interest was centered in material things. The details of investigation were considered of more importance than that which enthusiasm and inspiration might discover. Enthusiasm was discouraged; ideals of reason and common sense were substituted. A set form for manners and for literature was established, and authors were supposed to agree upon the rules without deviation. Even the subjects chosen were, for the most part, artificial in nature; much of the literature of the time was concerned with politics, with conventional city life, with dress, and with manners. It was into this age, with its set standards, its material interests, and indifferent ideals of morality, that Longinus's great Treatise on the Sublime was introduced. We marvel that such a book should have gained the popularity that it did. The critics chiefly were the ones who took it up in the beginning, but their number included Dryden, the greatest creative writer of the period. He admired the Sublime and his work shows evidences of its strong influence upon him. We may say that Dryden stands, for his age, as the chief exponent of Longinus's theory of criticism. He not only was a man who wielded a wide influence in his day, but represents to us, more thoroughly than any other number of authors may, the main tendencies of his age. He was quick to appreciate the popular

*Spingarn, vol I. p. IXiii. Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Letters, lect. xIvii (ed. 1820, III, p. 348). Beat de muralt, in the lettres sur les Anglais (ed. cit., p. 20) describes the inferiority of English comedy.

drift of opinion, and was responsive to its demands. Consequently, when we find him embodying in his own work the principles of the Sublime, and expressing in his criticism hearty admiration for its precepts, we may feel confident that there was a crossing of influences, one of which came from the popular acceptance of Longinus to Dryden, meeting that which he returned to his contemporaries to strengthen their previously formed conceptions. For this reason, and because Dryden is the one great figure of the later 17th century, I have singled him out for individual treatment. Considering the matter from all standpoints, I do not believe it would be a mistake to say, that the weight of Dryden's influence did as much to inculcate the Sublime in the criticism that followed, as did the entire accumulation of English opinion aside from him.

It is my purpose to determine the extent of Longinus's influence upon Dryden, and then, taking the literature of the period as a whole, to discuss the main tendencies which, as shown by various authors, represent theories of the Sublime.

I have given a list of the points in the Treatise that appear most plainly, but there are several things of which I wish to speak particularly, one of them being his so called beauty-blemish theory. As Prof. Robertson puts it, "he is no believer in what is faultily faultless". Elevation, with some flaws is to be preferred to uniform correctness without elevation. His attitude is plainly defined in sections XXXIII and XXXVI. "For my part, I am well aware that lofty genius is far removed from flawlessness; for invariable accuracy incurs the risk of pettiness, and in the sublime, as in great fortunes, there must be something which is over looked." As

standard

to whether there is any of taste, he replies in VII.

"In general, consider those examples of sublimity to be fine and genuine which all and always. For when men of different pursuits, lives, ambitions, ages, and languages, hold identical views on one and the same subject, then that verdict which results, so to speak, for a concert of discordant elements makes our faith in the object of admiration strong and unassailable."

This attitude, as I have pointed out later, must have had a strong bearing on the tendency to judge by taste, that was to develop afterward into romantic criticism. In close relation to this may be noticed his theory of imitation from the classics. It was no servile copying of form. "Therefore even we, when we are working out a theme which requires lofty speech and greatness of thought do well to imagine within ourselves, how, if need were, Homer would have said this thing, how Plato or Demosthenes, or in history, Thucydides would have made it sublime. The figures of those great men will meet on the way while we vie with them, they will stand out before our eyes, and lead our souls upgards, toward the measure of the ideal which we have conjured up. Still more so if we add to our mental picture this; how would Homer, were he here, listen to this phrase of mine?"

Just a word in regard to the five sources of the sublime, which seem to fall naturally into two divisions, the first deals with natural causes, the second with artificial. The natural causes says Longinus, are grasp of great conceptions and passions; the artificial are figures, diction and composition. The passage on great conceptions, the most important as indicated by its position,

brings out his lofty idea of individual and national morality, and their relation to literature. "Sublimity is the echo of a great soul. Hence also a bare idea, by itself and without a spoken word, sometimes excites admiration just because of the greatness of soul implied....The truly eloquent must be free from low and ignoble thoughts". (Sect. IX). "Nature has appointed us men to be no base or ignoble animals; but when she ushers us into life and into the vast universe as into some great assembly, to be as it were spectators of the mighty whole and the keenest aspirants for honor, forthwith she implants in our souls the unconquerable love of what ever is elevated and more divine than we. Wherefore not even the entire universe suffices for the thought and contemplation within the reach of the human mind, but our imaginations often pass beyond the bounds of space, and if we survey our life on every side and see how much more it everywhere abounds in what is striking and great, and beautiful, we shall soon discern the purpose of our birth".(Sect. XXXV)*

There is a similarity between "great souls", and it seems to me that just here it may not be amiss to speak of another author whose name was on everyone's lips during the years that saw the rebirth and popularity of the Sublime. Pope has spoken of Longinus as one,

"Whose own example strengthens all his laws,

And is himself the great sublime he draws." '

*The discussion on public morality and man's duty to the state is taken up at some length in Section XLIV.

Wark, Tandaan, 1751. vol. I. p. 136-

The same might be said of Milton. The work of these two men lay in parallel lines, connected by the bond of their sublimity, Milton standing in creative literature for the same things that Longinus did in criticism. Their aims were high and they felt the consecration of their calling. It was Milton who said that only a good man could be a great poet, which was one way of expressing the words of Longinus,--"For it is not possible that men with mean and servile ideas and aims prevailing throughout their lives should produce anything that is admirable and worthy of immortality. Great accents we expect to fall from the lips of those whose thoughts are deep and grave."¹ It seem impossible to determine how far Milton was influenced by the Sublime. He undoubtedly was familiar with the Treatise in the original Greek, but he makes only one reference to it in his work. Toward the end of his Tractate of Education, 1644, there is the following passage.

"And now lastly will be the time to read with them those organic arts which enable men to discourse and write perspicuously, elegantly, and according to the fitted style of lofty, mean, or lowly. Logic, therefore, so much as is useful, is to be preferred to this due place with all her well-couched heads and topics, until it be time to open her contracted palm into a graceful and ornate rhetoric, taught out of the rule of Plato, Aristotle, Phalerens, Cicero, Hermogenes, Longinus".

Addison believed that Milton was influenced by Longinus, and repeatedly refers to Longinus in his papers on Milton.*

*Addison probably was much influenced through Dennis's earlier criticisms of Longinus.

¹Longinus, Sect. IX.

In discussing the plausibility of one poet's being inspired by another, he says, Milton, though his own natural strength of genius was capable of furnishing out a perfect work, has doubtless very much raised and ennobled his conceptions, by such an imitation as that which Longinus has recommended¹. To Addison, Milton stood for all that Longinus represented in his Treatise on the Sublime. He speaks of Milton's chief talent and indeed his distinguishing excellence, being his sublimity of thought and language.² Quoting from Longinus, Addison says that we very often find that "those who excel most in stirring up the passions very often want the talent of writing in the great and sublime manner, and so on the contrary. Milton has shown himself a master in both these ways of writing."

Milton gave to his age an idea of the fundamental relation of poetry and religion and emphasised the belief, handed down from the Elizabethans, in the creative function of the imagination. Both of these tendencies might have been strengthened by his study of Longinus. That a great conception was fundamental for noble poetry, was another of Milton's theories that must have gained something from the Treatise. This view certainly had its effect upon his contemporaries, for we find Dennis a little later saying: "But let us now come to Milton in whom the poetical fire glows like a furnace, kept up to an uncommon fierceness by the force of art. What is the transcendency of Milton's genius which has been admitted by all the capable world, reduced to an art? Pray, how is the fire of

¹Spectator: No.339.

²Ibid. 279.

³Ibid. 285.

Homer and Virgil kept up, for they seem to me to have vastly more of the poetical art than Milton. Indeed, Milton had more felicity than they, which threw him upon the subject of *Paradise Lost*, a subject which often furnished him with the greatest ideas, which supplied him with the greatest spirit. But to show that it was rather felicity than art or skill, that determined him to that choice, he was by no means so happy in the choice of *Paradise Regained*, a subject which could supply him neither with the ideas nor with the spirit.¹ Dennis probably got much of his feeling for elevation and sublimity in religious subjects from Milton and Dryden. He speaks particularly of them both in this connection, referring to the fact that Longinus has given examples of religious ideas that give sublimity to discourse, and that all his examples of sublimity in the chapter of loftiness of conception are taken from Greek religion. In the Grounds of Criticism in Poetry, 1704, Dennis has a long passage on Milton and the elevation of his poetry, especially in religious subjects. He gives examples of this elevation from Paradise Lost, saying that he could add an infinite number more,

"If it were not altogether needless; for what has been said may suffice to show, that a poet, who intends to give that elevation and that gravity to his poem, which compose majesty, can fetch his ideas from no object so proper as from God. For as great elevation must be produced by a great admiration, as every passion which the

¹Remarks upon Several Passages in the Preliminaries to the Dunciad, etc. by Mr. Dennis. London, (printed by H. Whittingridge) 1729.

poet excites ought to be just and reasonable, and adapted to its object, it is impossible that anyone, who is not stupid, can seriously contemplate his maker, but that his soul must be exalted and lifted up toward its primitive objects, and be filled and inspired with the highest admiration. For 'tis then that the enthusiasm in poetry is wonderful and divine, when it shows the excellency of the author's discernment, and the largeness of his soul. Now all the ideas of God are such, that the more large and comprehensive the soul of a poet is, and the more it is capable of receiving those ideas, the more it is sure to be raised, and filled, and lifted to the skies with wonder: The spirit or the passion in poetry ought to be proportioned to the ideas, and the ideas to the object, and when it is so, it is utterly safe. And therefore, whenever in poetry there is a great spirit which is derived from ideas, whose objects are unworthy to move the soul of a great and wise man, there that spirit is either false, or at least has nothing sublimely admirable in it."¹

I have quoted this rather lengthy passage to show how thoroughly Milton was interpreted by Dennis through the medium of Longinus. The very phrases of Dennis's comment sound as though they might have been taken from the Sublime.

To be sure, it would be absurd to argue that because Milton was criticised in the spirit of Longinus, he was influenced by him. My point is this: Milton was familiar with Longinus, his standards and conceptions, in their elevation

¹ Dennis: *Grounds of Criticism in Poetry*, in his Works: London, 1718, II, 434.

and imaginative quality, were of the same mold, and his poetry was capable of inspiring the same height of admiration as did the theories of Longinus. Consequently, the fact that his work existed and was read contemporaneously with the Treatise on the Sublime, was a factor in establishing Longinus and inculcating his principles.

Welsted, who published a translation of Longinus in 1712, added his Remarks on Longinus, in which he takes up passages from the English poets that appear to bear an analogy to those mentioned in the Treatise. He quotes largely from Shakespeare and Milton, seeming to feel that they best represent the sublime in English literature. To illustrate what Longinus says about sublimeness of imagination and thought, Welsted, in quoting from Homer, remarks that Milton has surpassed Homer in the description of Satan, when he rises from the fiery surge, when he views the host of fallen Angels, and particularly when he is apprehended in Paradise.¹ In fact, when Welsted considered Milton in the light of Longinus's criticism of Homer, he declared that he was in no way inferior to Homer, and that, had Longinus been familiar with Milton, he would have admired him to the same extent as he has the classic writers, for his ability to arouse terror and astonishment. As splendid illustrations of Milton's grandeur and sublimity, Welsted refers to the several descriptions of the Messiah, that of his coming to drive out the rebellious Angels, his triumphant return; his riding into chaos; his ascending in jubelee; and others, where, the critic declares,

¹Works of Dionysius Longinus On the Sublime. By Mr. Welsted. London, 1712. Remarks on Longinus p. 144.

you will find all the beauty, energy and sublimeness, Longinus himself could have wished for."¹

We appreciate Milton's sublimity today, and realize, as Welsted said, that no other man ever had a genius so happily formed for the Sublime. And it seems fitting that we should remember, in considering the influence of Longinus's great Treatise during these somewhat barren years, that Longinus did not stand alone in his Sublimity. There was existing beside his the work of another master mind, the work of John Milton.

¹Ibid, p. 156.

MAIN POINTS IN THE TREATISE WHICH APPEAR
IN LATER 17th CENTURY CRITICISM.

Note: I have used, in preparing this thesis, two translations of Longinus, that of Professor Rhys Roberts, Cambridge, 1899, and A. O. Prickard's, Oxford, 1906. The section numbering runs the same in both texts, and I have made no distinction in my references between the two.

1. The attitude toward the rules was modified by Longinus. He said that art must guide genius, not dominate it. (Sect II)
2. Longinus emphasised nature as opposed to art. (Sect. II)
3. Passion, in the Treatise was considered a powerful ally of sublimity, and necessary to a poet's genius. (Sect. VIII)
4. Emphasis was laid on the fact that the poet should be able to arouse passion in his readers, or to lift men out of themselves. (Sect. I)
5. The absurdity of passion out of reason was brought out strongly in the Treatise. (Sect. III)
6. Longinus held in scorn all artificiality, and straining for effect. (Sect III)
7. He also believed simplicity to be more powerful than bombast. (Sect. IX)
8. In the Treatise, Longinus made use of religious subjects to illustrate the sublime. (Sect IX)
9. High aesthetic standards, for subject matter and treatment, were held in the Sublime. (Sect. IX)
10. Critical tendencies:
Longinus believed that a man of great genius might be excused for making slight errors. (Sect. XXXIII) He himself,

employed in criticism the method of comparison with great authors, using them as touchstones of sublimity. (Sect. VIII)

11. Longinus believed that the individual effect of poetry on a reader was important. (Sect. VII)
12. He believed that great conceptions were the basis of the finest poetry. (Sect VIII)

INFLUENCE OF LONGINUS
THROUGH THE FRENCH CRITICS.

Toward the end of the 17th century a great mass of French Critical literature was translated into English. It is not my purpose to discuss to any extent, these French authors and their theories, but a brief survey of a few of the most influential and popular critics of the period is necessary in considering their effect upon their English contemporaries, and the part they played in introducing the elements of Longinus Treatise on the Sublime. Directly after Boileau's translation appeared in 1674, attention was turned toward Longinus, and within a few years the Treatise had become immensely influential in the literary criticism of both France and England. The name of Longinus appeared with that of Aristotle and the other great ancients; some even preferred Longinus to Aristotle. Up to this time very little of a purely critical nature had been written in English, and for this reason, French criticism, reenforced by the prestige of the brilliant French literature of the mid-seventeenth century, was able to gain a foot hold upon the island, and become of far more importance than would have been possible had there been many national expressions of critical taste to combat. As it was, "l'influence fran^çaise s'exerça d^enc puissamment en Angleterre au XVII^e Siecle," to quote L. Charlanne, in literature as well as in other matters. Things French were popular. Many scholars went to France to study the language and customs; the flavor that still hung about the court of Charles II was strong. The return of his party had been in fact the commencement of the intense French vogue.

«Ayant passé en France ^{un} grand nombre d'années quelques - uns une partie de leur jeunesse, ils rentraient en Angleterre profondément transformés, certains absolument fran^çais. Leur séjour à Paris,

anpres de la cour ou les avaient seduit les charmes d'une elegance, d'une civilisation superieures, avait fait d'eux des hommes nauveaux, ^{avec} une predilection tres marquee pou'r les goûts français, les modes et les idées francaises, en un mot pour tout ce qui etait français; je dirais presque, si je l'osais, qu'^{ils} ^{ik} emportaient dans leurs bagages le microbe français---Quelques - uns, parmi les lettres, avaient pu fréquentes les salons de l'Hotel de Rambouillet et y goûter les joliss^{es} de e'esprit précieux. D'autres, qui avaient assisté a quelques representations de Moliere et de Racine, rentraient completement changes, ne pouvant plus gu^{ère} s'accorder du theatre anglais, tel que l'avaient concu les successeurs de Shakespeare. Unesociete, une litterature nouvelles leur avaient ete revelees, dont ^{ils} ^{ik} s'etaient épris aussitôt." ¹

It was, as I have said before, a period in England of assimilation; men were interested in testing the theories of earlier ages and in making their own distinctions between the good and the bad. The arguments of French criticism were introduced into England in Dryden's Essay of Dramatic Poesy in 1668, and it was Dryden, the chief critic of his time that quoted Corneille, Boileau, Rapin, Le Bossu, and other French critics again and again. Interest in the regular drama was also increasing steadily, and French influence came to England in the form of direct recourse to French drama, The Play House to be Let, by Davenant, acted soon after the Restoration, is a direct translation in the second act of Molier's Sgauarelle, ou le Cocu Imaginaire. French critics who say English plays acted, went back to France and commented upon them from their point of view. These comments were in turn read by the English, and doubt-

¹ L. Charlanne. L'influence Francaise in Agnleterre an XVII^e Siecle. Paris, 1906, p. VIII.

less did much to influence their dramatists. Sorbiers in 1663 says of English theaters,----"The plays would not meet with the same applause in France as they obtain in England. The poets despise uniformity of place and the rule of twenty four hours. They write comedies that are supposed to last twenty five years, and when they have shown you the marriage of a Prince in the first act, they exhibit all at once the five deeds of his son, and they lead him far away to many lands. They pride themselves above all on their good rendering of the various passions, vices, and virtues, and in these they succeed rather well."....¹ This however, was not the universal French attitude toward the rules, for we find mere saying, "It seems to me that even the loosest rule always acts as a constraint upon style, and robs it of some of its ease and charm."²

Corneille, was widely read during these years, and it is probable that when his three Discours and the series of Examens appeared in 1660 Dryden accepted them as critical material upon which to base his own Essays. Professor Saintsbury suggests that their influence upon English Criticism, exercised through Dryden is still active.³ Corneilles Examens of differenct plays show his submission to the rules, his outward submission at least, but it is plain that he feels restracted by them. He would like permission to sketch the single day to thirty hours, and to have the single place extended to the limits of one town. The action of his plots interested him to a

¹ Jusserand: English Essays from a French Pen. London, 1895, ch. IV. p. 171.

² Mere: Oeuvres, Amsterdam, 1692, II. 72 - 7, 118.

³ Saintsbury: A History of Criticism, New York, 1902, Vol. II p. 264.

greater extent than his fellow dramatists. How the bonds hampered the poet is summed up concisely in the judgment which the Academy, at Richelieu's order, passed on Corneille's best play, the Cid, to the effect that the ^{host} fact in endeavoring to observe the rules of art, had chosen rather to sin against those of nature.¹ Corneille did, however, by a lucky chance, get away from the too general and abstract criticism of those critics whose rules he followed. His Examens show that his tendency was to consider each individual piece of work by itself and in its particulars,----a method of criticism that was not customary at that time.

To quote from Professor Saintsbury, " the severity and stately dignity of the greek drama, in great part the results of circumstances under which it was acted, were foreign to the turbulent and fiery tragedy of Corneilles, produced under wholly different condition and in a wholly altered state of society, with far more complex emotions, No wonder that a genius like Corneille, chafed against rigid restrictions, he was not flexible enough to get around."²

St. Evremand, who lived and wrote in England, was a great admirer of Corneille.³ He boldly puts him before the ancients in the matter of excellence in tragedy, and frequently speaks highly of him while emphasising the necessity of writing from real emotion in order to produce the same passion in the reader. Those who follow the rules exactly, he says, without the real emotion back of them, can never

* Saint Evremand defends Corneille's attitude toward the Ancient nobly. Vol. I p. 107.

¹ Brander Mathews: French Dramatists p. 6. New York, 1901.

² Saintsbury: A History of Criticism Vol. II p. 263.

³ Saint Evremand: Oeuvres Melees, Paris, 1865, Vol. II P. 363.

produce the same effect.¹ This emotion however must be sincere and intense, for words are incapable of expressing all that is in the least;² and the emotion, if not deep, will not be conveyed to the reader through them. The elevation and sublimity of poetry he emphasises, and refers to it in contrast to its possible manners and depths.³ "Le grand est une perfection dans les esprits",⁴ he says, something that is not obtained by following the rules alone, for without genius a writer can never be any thing but regular⁵. "It faut aimer la rigle, pour eviter la confusion; it faut aimer le bon sens qui modère l'ardeur a'une imagination allumée".⁶ This subordination of the rules must have had tremendous influence toward liberalizing English poetry from their bonds during the later part of the 17th century. He stressed the changed condition of the age and the different point of view that was now taken of tragedy. Aristotle he said was not excellent enough for all time, and new things had been found out since his day, but there were very few people still who were capable of appreciating good literature. "Comme les bons juges sont aussi rares qui les bons auteurs; comme il est aussi difficile de trouver le discernement dans les uns, que le genie dans les autres".⁷ Perhaps the most interesting critical essay he has left is his Dessertation sur le mot "vaste". He uses "Taste" here in the sense which it came to have later, not at all

1 Ibid p 366
 2 Ibid p 426
 3 Ibid p 507
 4 Ibid p 422
 5 Ibid p 387
 6 Ibid p 387
 7 Ibid p 466

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in the generally accepted use then, ^{as} or some hard and set standard by which judgment might be formed. "Taste to him", says Mr. Saintsbury "meant the approbation and satisfaction of a competent judge, well gifted, well tried, and taking pains to keep his palate clean." His attitude toward the imagination is also interesting, coming at this time. "L'Esprit", he says, is of three parts, jugement, la memoire and l'imagination, but only the imagination may the work vast apply:- "Vaste se fout appliquer a une imagination que s'egare, qui se ferd, qui se forme des visions, et des chimeres," ¹One can easily see what an inspiring critic St. Evremand must have been to those writers who were interested in the School of Taste,* and desired to set up a method of criticism whereby individual appreciation and talent for discernment of beauties might be of more value than familiarity with the rules and knowledge of the set forms of literature.

La Bruyere is another French author that apparently assimilated a great deal of Longinus. He did very little critical work, but what he did shows the influence of the Sublime. He himself, a Greek student, indicated his preference for individuality and freedom in literature. The word sublime often occurs in his criticism, and especially in connection with Corneille, whose staunch admirer he was, "Des Ouvrages de l'Esprit," of his Caracteres is perhaps of most value to us. He seems to realize that there are ^{times} when the rules are of no importance, an attitude which may or not be due to the influence of Longinus. "Quance une lecture ~~vous~~

* For a discussion of the School of Taste, see Spingarn, Critical Essays of the Seventeenth Century.

¹ Oxford, 1908. Vol I p. IXXXVIII -- CVI.

Vol. II p. 426.

eleve l'esprit,---- ne cherchey pas une autre rgle pour juger: it est bon."¹ This recognition of the power that may elevate and inspire, that is above all rule, is something that the critics of the Restoration stood sadly in need of. They dared not admit to being inspired, they only approved of that which corresponded to their set standard most closely. Corneille pointed out the difference between a piece that was regular and perfect and one that was really fine. He also expressed a doubt as to whether a perfect piece of work could exist, for he says it is less difficult for a rare genius to hit upon the great and sublime than to avoid all errors.² La Bruyere also brings in the idea of there being one way to say a thing that is better than all other ways -- "Entre tonter les differents expressions qui peuvent rendre une scule de nos pensees it n'y en a qu' une qui sait la bonne."³

¹ La Bruyere, the characters Des Ouvrages de l'Esprit. Paris 1865 - 1862 Sec. 31.

² La Bruyere: The Characrers of the Manners of the Age. London, 1700. p. 13.

³ Des Ouvrages de l' Esprit. Sec. 17.

Boileau, one of the most important French critics, influenced England greatly. Dryden was an admirer of his and probably first had his attention called to Longinus by Boileau's translation in 1674.* Be this as it may, the translation certainly did much to assist the attack on the criticism of faults. Dryden¹, in 1685, and after him Mulgrave,² Dennis³, Addison⁴, and numerous others insisted that the true critic is concerned with the beauties rather than the faults of an author. This theory was founded directly upon Longinus and did much to develop appreciative and interpretative criticism against regularity and imitation.

To quote from Charlanne, "Constante donc fut l'estime des écrivains anglais pour Boileau et grand aussi fut son autorité."⁵ Boileau's own work was undoubtedly greatly influenced by the Treatise on the Sublime; he mentions that his translation of it was first made for his own use and instruction, but after having found that the Art of Poetry, to which the Treatise had some relation in theory, was well received, he decided to publish the Treatise itself.⁶ His own estimate of the Treatise was later reflected upon himself; in His Life, written by Monsieur Des Maizeau, occurs this statement,

* See chapter on Dryden.

¹ Ker, I. 264.

² Buckinghamshire Works, ed. 1729, I. 180.

³ Pref. to Impartial Critick, London, 1693, and to Remarks on Prince Arthur, 1696.

⁴ Spectator, No. 291.

⁵ L. Charlanne L'Influence etc. p. 556.

⁶ Boileau's Works, Vol. I. Trans. by Mr. Ozell. 1712. plvi (Future references to Boileau are taken from this edition).

"Great Genius's stand in need of nothing but themselves to make their way in the world; the sole strength of their parts leads 'em on to the very thing that is most excellent and most sublime in that kind of study which hits their temper. You will soon see, Sir, that this was the case of Monsieur Despreaux"¹ Of Boileau's Art of Poetry the third canto embodies, to a marked extent, the spirit of Longinus, though there are several passages in the first two cantos that deserve mention. His attitude toward the rules in one of these passages is interesting; in speaking of Waller he suggests that the rules by which he wrote and by which others have so long been governed, may for present authors be a guide.² This idea Dryden expresses in nearly the same form in his Essay on Criticism. Chaucer, Boileau says, restrained his poetic rage by Nature's Rules,³ and it is to Nature, that Boileau, the disciple of classicism, looked for inspiration. The opening lines of his Art of Poetry express his belief that a poet is born not made, and it is useless for those not endowed by nature with the divine fire, to attempt to achieve greatness.* He even goes a step beyond this and maintains that nature is often spoiled by study and art. Such doctrines must have been more than startling to the majority of the critics of both France and England. It was well for Boileau that his authority was as great as it was, for a statement like this from a lesser critic would have been rejected as too extraordinary for comment. "Consult yourself and let the heart indite,"

* Je hais ces vains auteurs, dant la muse forcie
M'entretient en ses feux, toujours fraide et glacie;
Qui s'appligent par art, et, sous de seus rassis,
S'erigent, pour rimes, en amoureaux trausis.

Boileau, A. P. II, 45 sq.

¹ His Life, written to Joseph Addison, by Mr. Des Maizeaux, Works, Vol. I.

² Boileau; Works Vol. I. Canto I.

³ Ibid.

lis his advice to those who would write poetry to move their readers; and he believes most firmly that poetry should arouse passion. That which did not raise hopes and fears in the hearts of those who read it, was of little value. The "cold discourse" of "learned scenes" was not the expression of "skill divine".² The faults he condemns are lombart and meanness. The word meanness as he uses it seems rather to refer to the simple and ordinary, the material that Wordsworth considered proper for poetry. "The child who with his little hand, Picked up the shining pebbles from the sand", is an object in Boileau's sight not worthy of poetic treatment. "Allow your work a just and nobler flight"³, he says, let it be a great conception and an elevating thought. The great and noble thought was of course, Longinus's first requirements for poetry, and passionate and inspired production the next. Many other precepts from the Treatise, he almost paraphrases, in the Reflections des rheteur Langin, for example, he urges that the spirit, even in its sublime flights, has need of a method to guide it to say what it should and in the right place, that the value of our work is left to be determined by posterety, and that the sublime in poetry raises the spirit and makes one conceive a higher opinion of ones self ⁴. Corresponding lines in Longinus run thus:

¹ Art of Poetry, Canto II.

² Art of Poetry, Canto III.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Oeuvres Complete de Boileau Paris, 1873, Vol. III.

"greatness is exposed to a danger of its own, if left to itself without science to control, unsteadied, unballasted." (Sect. II) "Yet more stimulating than all will it be if you add: If I write this, in what spirit will all future ages hear me?" (Sect. XIV) "For it is a fact of nature that the soul is raised by true sublimity, it gains a proud step upwards, it is filled with joy and exultation, as though itself had produced what it hears" (Sect. VII).

Following Boileau's translation of Longinus in 1674, appeared these Critical Reflections on Longinus, in which he takes up certain passages in the Treatise and discusses them with critical applications to contemporary French writers. These Reflections do not seem to be of special value except as they brought out the points in the Treatise which were under discussion, more emphatically before the public. It seems that sometime before this Dacie~~s~~ had made some remarks upon Longinus and Boileau's translation of the Sublime, which Boileau considered very learned,¹ and later inserted in the edition of his own works; but for the most part the reflections consist of translation and explanations of the Greek phraseology. For example, he takes the word, *έπινομός*, and defends it as, "A man who has a good imagination, and thinks upon every subject, what is to be thought upon it, which is properly what we call a man of good sense."² A passage like this might throw some light on the criticism that has been made of Boileau, notable by Mr. Saintsbury,³ that his constant appeal to good

¹ Works London 1712 Vol. I p. IXXXVI.

² Ibid Vol. II Critical Reflections ch. III.

³ Saintsbury: History of Criticism, Vol. II, p. 288

sense is contrary to the teaching of Longinus, whom he accepts as a master. Good sense evidently included imagination and taste, in the mind of Boileau, as well as reason and judgment, and would in no way be incompatible with his theory of what the elements of good poetry might be, according to Longinus. Furthermore, Boileau's discussion of the passage in Genesis, ch. I ver. 3-- "And God said, let there be light and there was light", which Longinus gives as an example of the sublime, might have done something toward adding fuel to the flame of discussion that was being carried on at this time concerning the use of religious subjects.¹

Even Rapin, whom Mr. Saintsbury calls, "The main and appointed Helot of the neo-classic system" reflects sometimes the influence of Longinus. There is nothing can be delightful, he says, but that which moves the affections, and which makes impression on the soul². But he realized that modern tragedy could not turn upon the emotions of pity and teror alone, for there are machines, he says, that will not play as they ought, but by great thoughts and noble expressions³. 'Tis impossible for any one to succeed in the true sublimity of style, unless he be entirely persuaded, that he must owe this sublimity rather to the things of which he treats, to the noble ideas which he

¹ Oeuvres Complete de Boileau: Vol.III Reflexions Critiques sus quelques passages des rheteur Longin.

² Rapin: Critical Works, translated by Rymer London 1706, II, 212

³ Ibid., p. 19

forms of them, and to the elevation of his genius, than to the boldness of expression, or pomp and splendor of words.¹

"But it is not enough", continues Rapin, "that the expressions be stately and great, they must also possess heat and vehemence; and above all there must shine through the discourse a certain grace and delicacy."² Rapin here refers to Longinus, saying that in the Treatise he always proposed Homer as the most just and exact rule for the sublime style. Our own poets however, Rapin adds, "Make their expressions swell to supply the want of noble sentiments; but it is not only the greatness of the subject and the thoughts that give this air of majesty to poesie, there is likewise required, lofty words and noble expressions"³

In short the art of poetry requires so much more ability than do any of the other arts, that nothing but supreme genius can produce it. This genius must be innate, no one can attain it through study alone,* but there must be added to the native genius a certain amount of balance in order that the muse may not run away with good sense. "Tis in no wise true, as most believe, that some little mixture of madness goes to make up the character of the poet; for though his discourse ought in some manner to resemble that of one

* "One may be an orator with out the natural gift of eloquence, because art may supply that defect; but no man can be a poet without a genius; the want of which, no art or industry is capable to repair".

Rapin; Reflex. on Aristotle, Part I. Sec. 6.

¹ Ibid., p 19.

² Rapin; Reflections on Aristotle: Treatise on poesie containing the necessary rational and universal rules for the epick, dramatic and other sorts of poetry with reflections on the works of the ancient and modern poets, and their faults noted.

Robert L'Estrange Leland 1674. Sect. 43.

³ Ibid. Sect. 41.

inspired; yet his mind must always be serene that he may always discern when to let his muse run mad, and when to govern his transports. And this serenity of spirit which makes the judgment is one of the most essential parts of poetic genius".¹ With this serenity of spirit, which indicates Rapin's rationalism, must go a deep understanding of nature and an avoidance of all that is affected and insincere. "If words are affected, they lose their grace, because they become cold and flat when they are far-fetched."² Rapin also has an aversion to the too "fine writing"; or the straining after an affect. It is a general fault, he says, that poetry is crammed with too much wit, it ceases to be natural, while it strives to be too fine.³ This artificial poetry cannot arouse the passions, as poetry that is inspired by true genius may; but this genius is in itself a gift from heaven and not easily to be found. "Happy is he to whom nature has made this present, by this he is raised above himself; whereas others are always low and creeping, and never speak but what is mean and common. He that hath a genius appears a poet on the smallest and most minute subjects, by the turn he gives them, and the noble manner in which he expresses himself."⁴ This genius, says Rapin, is a celestial fire which enlarges and heightens the soul, and makes it express things with a lofty air.

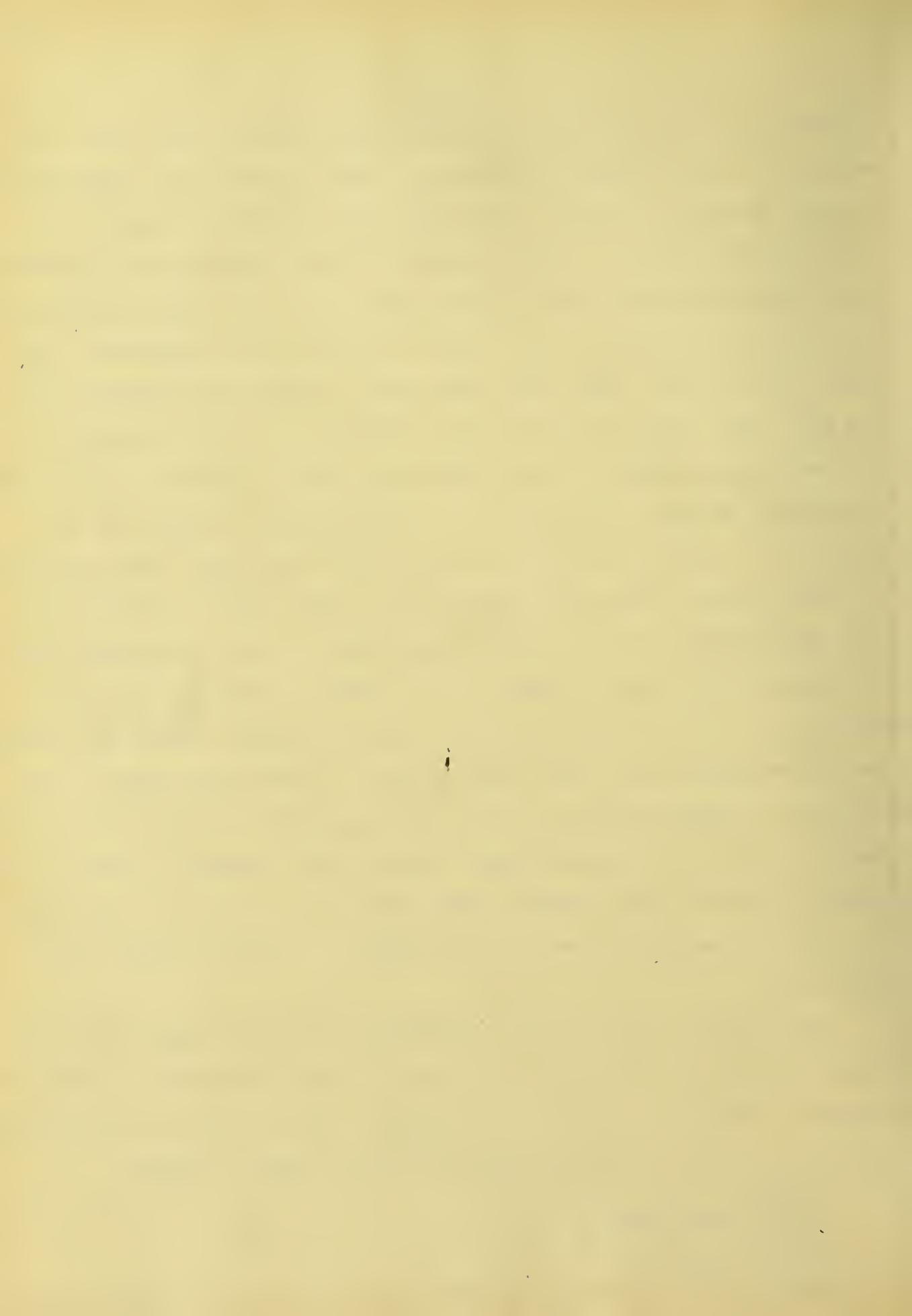
The ancients, Rapin felt, possessed this genius, and it is interesting to see that his idea of imitation of the classics, in part corresponds exactly to that held by Longinus. For the poet to read these old masters, and to become inspired with the flame of their

¹Ibid.

²Ibid. Sect xxxii

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid. Sect 6.



genius was the theory of imitation that is expressed in the Sublime, as well as in Aristotle's Poetics, Rapin says, "All the briskness and life which art has by its figures, is not sufficient to heighten the Ode so far as its character requires. But the reading alone of Pindar, is more capable to inspire this genius, than all my Reflections". *¹ This is not a subservient following of the neo-classic rules of art, but a distinct understanding and appreciation of the individual reaction and inspiration that the poetry of a great writer may effect in the hearts by his readers. Of course, it is only a great writer that is able to arouse these lofty passions, for, "to excite those emotions of the soul and transports of admiration that are expected from Poesy, all the wit that the soul of man is capable of, is scarce sufficient."²

As Boileau had said, when confronted with the question as to what this great power really was, that might arouse the passions of men to such a height; ---"Jene sais quoi";---so Rapin says, "There is yet in poetry, certain things that cannot be expressed, which are, as it were, mysteries. There are no precepts to teach the hidden graces, the insensible charms, and all the secret power of poesy, which passes to the heart, as there is no method to teach to please.

* *Compare:*

"Even so from the great genius of the men of old do streams pass off to the souls of those who emulate them, as though from holy caves; inspired by which, even those not too highly susceptible to the God are possessed by the greatness which was in others". Longinus, Sect. XIII.

¹ Ibid. Sect. 30.

² Ibid.

'Tis a pure effect of Nature"¹.

This secret power, that so puzzled the critics, was what Longinus attributed to sublimity, a force beyond and above man's grasp, not to be understood, but all powerful in its effect. "Sublimity, we know, brought out at the happy moment, parts all the matter this way and that, and like a lightning flash, reveals, at a stroke and in its entirety, the power of the orator."^{2*}

Fenelon, in his *Dialogues sur l'Eloquence*, showed a keen appreciation of Longinus³. He considers exaltation⁴ the result of inspired work, and is scornful of those critics who look only for faults.⁵ Following Boileau in his fervid expressions of admiration for the bible⁶, he calls attention to its literary greatness. He also seems to give even warmer praise and more comprehending appreciation to Longinus than did Boileau himself. "Le Sublime de Longin", says Fenelon, "joint aux preceptes beaucoup d'exemples qui les rendent sensible. Cet auteur traite le sublime d'une maniere sublime, comme le traducteur (sc. Boileau) remarque; il echauffe l'imagination il eleve l'esprit du lecteur, il lui forme le gout et lui apprend a distinguer judicieusement le bien et le mal dans les orateurs celeb-

**Du Grand et du Sublime*, a small treatise to which I have not had access, but which doubtless contains something of interest to students of Longinus, is included in the Amsterdam edition of Rapin's original works, (3 Vol., 1709-10)

¹Ibid. Sect 57.

²Longinus. Sect I.

³Oeuvres de Fenelon, Paris, 1870 containing, *Dialogues sur l'Eloquence*, passage on Demosthenes, Isocrates, Dianysius of Halicarnassus and Longinus.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid.

res de l'antiquite" ¹.

Two other French critics, who had a strong influence in both England and France during the latter part of the 17th century, were Le Bossu and Bonhours, the former even being referred to by Dryden as "the best of modern critics".² Bonhours was widely quoted, especially by Addison in the earlier years of the 18th century. In "La Maniere de Bien Penser dans les Ouvrager d'Esprit, (1687), Bonhours has a discussion of the true and false in Sublimity and Wit, using Longinus and Hermogenes as authorities.

¹Premier Dialogue sur l'Eloquence.

²Saintsbury; History of Criticism. Vol. II, p. 314 note I.

DRYDEN

Passing now to the effect of the Sublime on English literature, we see first of all that Dryden, the greatest critic as well as the greatest creative writer of the years closing the 17th century, was influenced again and again by Longinus; and not only in theory, but in actual practice. In his critical work, and more frequently in the prefaces to his plays, he quotes Longinus. John Churton Collins says that Dryden's Greek was not sufficient to allow us to suppose that he ever read the essay on the Sublime in the original. He doubtless approached Longinus through Boileau's translation that appeared in 1774.¹ The fact that before 1675 no mention of the Sublime appears in his work and that after this year frequent and capious references are made to it would seem to bear out this theory. Once received, Longinus was accepted by Dryden quite unreservedly. He pronounces him to be undoubtedly after Aristotle the greatest critic among the Greeks and confesses himself to be his disciple. Aristotle and his interpreters", he says in his *Apology for Heroic Poetry*, "and Horace and Longinus, are the authors to whom I owe my lights".

But to take up the probable influence that French literature exerted upon Dryden. Johnson, later, in calling him the father of English criticism remarks upon the fact that he was greatly influenced by Boileau, and it is true, that the name of Boileau is often on Dryden's tongue. In 1670 he translated Boileau's *Art of Poetry*. He also wrote *The Character of M. St. Evremond*, and in all his own works makes frequent reference to French critics. Bassu is quoted largely in the Preface to Troilus and Cressida, and in

¹ John Churton Collins: *Essays and Studies*, London, 1895. p. 10.

the Essay on Satire occurs this statement, that has considerable bearing upon his estimation of French critics. Speaking of Boileau and Rapin, he remarks, "the latter alone is sufficient, were all other critics lost, to teach anew the rules of writing;" and further adds, "If I would only cross the seas, I might find in France a living Horace and a Juvenal, in the person of the admirable Boileau"¹.

Because of the high respect that Dryden had for Boileau and his contemporaries, the admiration that they expressed for Longinus must have influenced him greatly. It is most natural though, that even without the incentive of popular approval he would have appreciated and accepted the Treatise on the Sublime as a work of great value to criticism. The worth of poetry that made an individual appeal was not unknown to Dryden. The divine spark that was kindled in another's soul might awaken an answering flame in his. Of Chaucer he says, "I found I had a soul congenial to his, and that I had been conversant in the same studies"² and it can very easily be believed that something of the same feeling led him to appreciate a work of inspiration and genius where ever he might find it. Antiquity alone, he says is no plea for the excellency of a poem. "Let us render to our predecessors what is their due, without confining ourselves to a senile imitation of all they write; and without assuming to ourselves the title of better poets, let us ascribe to the gallantry and civility of our age the advantage we have above them"³. But even admitting this

¹Essay on Satire.

²Preface to the Fables.

³Essay on Dramatic Poetry.

advantage, Dryden did not hesitate to say that the genius of Shakespeare was able to surmount the difficulties and ignorance of his age, and eclipse all others in his creative work.

"But spite of all his pride a secrete shame
 Invades his breast at Shakespeare's sacred name:
 Awed when he hears his god-like Romans rage
 He in a just despair, would quit the stage.
 And to an age less polished, more unskilled,
 Does with disdain, the foremost honours yield."¹

Shakespeare's perfect character drawing he praises, and, of more importance to us, the emotions his character display. "To describe these naturally and to move them artfully is one of the greatest commendations that can be given to a poet: to write pathetically, says Longinus cannot proceed but from a lofty genius. A poet must be born with this quality."²

In the Preface to *All for Love* Dryden admits, that in his style he has tried to imitate the divine Shakespeare, and hopes he has excelled him. This sincere admiration for Shakespeare, with the application of Longinus theory concerning the pathetic in poetry is convincing. Dryden as well as Longinus made no mistake about the sublime. As Prof. Saintsbury has well put it in speaking of Dryden: "He knows that the delight, the transport, counts first as a criterian. Literature in general, poetry in particular, should, of course interest, but it must move."³ He never can help considering the individual works of literature almost with

¹ Prologue to *Aureng Zebe*

² Preface to *Troilus and Cressida*

³ Saintsbury: *History of Criticism*, Vol.II p.374

out regard to their principles, and simply on the broad, the sound, the unshakable ground of the impression they make on him"¹. This faith in the value of individual appreciation was something almost unique in this period. Dryden might be called the father of impressionistic criticism, and certainly he was aided in this tendency by his study of Longinus. His attitude toward critics is much the same as that which appears in the Treatise. Both his tendency toward impressionistic criticism, and his faith in the beauty-blemish theory, may be observed in this one paragraph; "They wholly mistake the nature of criticism who think its business is principally to find fault. Criticism as it was first instituted by Aristotle, was meant as a standard of judging well; the chiefest part of which is to observe those excellences which should delight a reasonable reader. If the design, the conduct, the thoughts, and the expressions of a poem, be generally such as proceed from a true genius of poetry the critic ought to pass his judgement in favor of the author. It is malicious and unmanly to snarl at the little lapses of a pen, from which Virgil himself stands not exempted"². This merciful attitude toward the genius that nods is exactly in accord with that of Longinus, who says directly that there must be height and depths to even an artist's work, and that the small faults may be overlooked in consideration of the heights that have been obtained. He is always generous, as is Dryden "it is malicious and unmanly to snarl at the little lapses"². How different this is from the majority of critical remarks made during the 17th century, when the work of Shakespeare and even that of Milton was being dissected

¹Ibid. p 373

²Apology to State of Innocence

and pulled to pieces with much gusto. "Those excellences which should delight a reasonable reader" were not always taken as sufficient to counterbalance the minor faults that appeared so important to the Restoration critic, but with Dryden they did, and it was not to the well established writers alone that he was generous. He believed with Longinus that young men of promise should be encouraged and helped to achieve greater things. In his own big-hearted way, he urges D'avenant to be merciful to young authors,¹ and makes scathing remarks concerning critics who are but ill prepared to pass judgement upon others, and yet are most violent in their denunciations. "Young men, with out learning", these are, he says, who "set up for judges and they that talk loudest understand the least"². And again in the appeal made to reason and good will in such lines as these; "Good nature, by which I mean beneficence and candour, is the products of right reason, which of necessity will give allowance to the failings of others, by considering that there is nothing perfect in mankind, and by distinguishing that which comes nearest to excellency though not absolutely free from faults, will certainly produce a candour in the judge."³

In this place Dryden goes on to speak of Shakespeare and Homer as native geniuses, "in either of whom we find all arts and sciences, all moral and natural philosophy, without knowing that they ever studied them". This is perhaps a fair indication of his feeling at this particular time at least, in regard to laws and rules of art. As far as the rules embodied fundamental principles

¹Prologue to Circe

²Preface to Dan Sebastian

³Essay on Satire

Dryden accepted them; but as for arbitrarily forming poetry by them he declared it was out of the question. He shows plainly the influence of Rapin in his statement that, "if the rules be well considered we shall find them to be made only to reduce nature into method, to trace her step by step, and not to suffer the least mark of her to escape us: it is only by these, that probability in fiction is maintained, which is the soul of poetry...If fancy be not regulated, it is mere caprice, and utterly incapable to produce a reasonable and judicious poem"¹. This, it may be observed is exactly the standpoint of Longinus. Nature, he says, does not work at random, and the greatest natural forces are the most dangerous unless regulated. Nature comes first, art is second but not less important.

As for the three unities, that were the subject of so much discussion during this period, Dryden did not entirely accept them. When it was necessary to choose between the unities and beauty, he chose the latter, as the more important. In the preface to *Dan Sebastian* occur these lines:

"I must further declare freely that I have not exactly kept to the three mechanic rules of unity. I know them and had them in my eye, but followed them only at a distance; for the genius of the English cannot bear too regular a play; we are given to variety, even to the debauchery of pleasure. My scenes are therefore sometimes broken, because my underplot required them so to be, though the general scene remains, - of the same castle; and I have taken the time of two days, because the variety of accidents, which are here represented could not naturally be supposed to arrive in one:

¹Preface to *Troilus and Cressida*.

but to gain a greater beauty, it is lawful for a poet to supersede a less¹.

And again, in the Dedication to Love Triumphant, is caught a glimpse of French influence, coming from one who dared to break away from the bonds at times. "I have followed the example of Corneille", say Dryden, "and stretched the latitude to a street and palace, not far distance from each other in the city". After all it was simply nature that appealed to him as the fundamental guide. "Knowledge of nature was the original rule; and all poets ought to follow her - those things, which delight all ages, must have been an imitation of nature"². A few lines further on catachreses and hyperboles are spoken of as "having found their place in poetry as heightening and shadows are in painting, to make the figure bolder and cause it to stand off to sight", which very naturally reminds us of what Longinus has to say concerning the use and power of figures. To use Dryden's own words, "Imagery is, in itself, the very height and life of poetry. It is as Longinus describes it, a discourse, which by a kind of enthusiasm, or extraordinary emotion of the soul, makes it seem to us that we behold those things which the poet paints, so as to be pleased with them and admire them".³ The influence that must have come from the Treatise is plainly discernable in regard to these figures. We often find this theory appearing in Dryden's creative work, as well as in his criticism, as for example, "All men will conclude it necessary, that sublime subjects ought to be adorned with the sublimest, and consequently often, with the most figurative expressions"⁴

¹ Preface to Dan Sebastian

² Apology to State of Innocence

³ Apology for the Fall of Man

⁴ Apology to State of Innocence

And again, speaking of this own play of Dan Sebastian, he says, "there is more noble daring in the figures, and more suitable to the loftiness of the subject":¹

It might not be rash to conclude from the phrase, "noble daring in the figures", that Dryden's attitude toward imaginative work would not be wholly antagonistic; in fact he permitted greater license in this respect than did almost any of his contemporaries. He may be found expressing an opinion such as this, "A heroic part is not tied to a base representation of what is true, or exceedingly probable; but that he may let himself loose to visionary objects and to the representation of such things as depending not on sense, and therefore not to be comprehended by knowledge may give him a freer scope for imagination".² He quotes Corneille on the selecting of details to arouse the imagination,³ and says that in the description of a beautiful garden or meadow the poet will please our imagination more than the place itself can delight our sight.⁴ Does he not give full homage to imaginative literature, and the effect it may produce on the reader? It is always the personal reaction that Dryden is looking for. He desires his audience to be inspired, thrilled, and lifted up from the normal plane of existence. He refers with scorn to the meanness of thought that may be found in some literature.⁵ Shakespeare even is condemned for this fault; of him Dryden says, "never did any author precipitate himself from such height of thought to so low expressions, as he often does".⁶ It is the height of thought", the inspiration,

¹Preface to Dan Sebastian.

⁶Ibid.

² Essay on Heroic Poetry.

³ Essay on Dramatic Poetry.

⁴Ibid

⁵ Essay on dramatic Poetry.

that is the best of poetry. "It is true", he says, "that to imitate well is a poets' work; but to affect the soul, and excite the passions, and, above all, to move admiration (which is the delight of serious plays) a base imitation will not serve".¹ Longinus had said that the classics should be read in order that the fire and genius of them might serve to inspire new poetry, not that they should be coldly imitated in form and treatment. It is the spirit, the "great soul", of the master that inspires. The classic poets, Dryden said possessed the greater ability.

¹Ibid

"We have not wherewithal to imagine so strangely, so justly, and so pleasantly; in short if we have the same knowledge, we cannot draw out of it the same quintessance; we cannot give it such a turn, such propriety, and such a beauty, something is deficient in the manner, or the words but more in the nobleness of our conception."¹

The effort here to express himself is evident; he is struggling to find the thing in which poets are lacking, but he cannot exactly be satisfied with his terms. "A something is deficient in the manner" he says, but what is that "something"?* It is the sublimity, the divine touch, that Dryden feels to be so often lacking. He has felt it within himself and has struggled to express it, but has failed of the supreme power. "I confess myself too weak for the inspiration; the priest was always unequal to the oracle: the God within him was too mighty for his breast: he laboured with the sacred revelation; and there was more of the mystery left behind than the divinity itself could enable him to express"²

Of a necessity the poet himself must be a man of innate power and of far more than ordinary delicacy; in order to fulfill his high calling, he must be born not made. In this Dryden turns to Bossu, and, calling him the best of modern critics, says that "all excellent arts, and particularly that of poetry, have been invented and brought to perfection by men of transcendent genius".³

* It was Boileau who, struggling with this same difficulty, said; "C'est ce je ne sais quai qui nous charme, et sans lequel la beaute meme n'auroit ni grace ni beaute." *Oeuvres Complites de Boileau; Reflexions critiques sur quelques passages des rhetieurs. Longin. Paris, 1873, Vol.III p. 297.*

¹Essay on Satire.

²Dedication to The State of Innocence.

Preface to Troilis and Cressida.

Their duty is to express the highest beauty, and to beauty they must sacrifice; greatness is their guardian angel, which protects them.¹ The poet himself must be great in order to produce great things. Tragedy ought always to be great, and consequently wonderful, for, says Dryden, that which is not wonderful, is not great.²

For the mediocre poet, Dryden has no use. In the *Apology to The State of Innocence*, he says, "Longinus who was undoubtedly after Aristotle, the greatest critic among the Greeks, in his 27th chapter of the Sublime, has judiciously preferred the sublime genius that sometimes errs, to the middling or indifferent one, which makes few faults, but seldom or never rises to any excellence".³ There follows quite a discussion of Longinus which shows how thoroughly in sympathy Dryden was with the Treatise. Later, concerning this same matter of the relative merits of poets, appears this not ambiguous statement; "if you were bad, or what is worse, an indifferent poet, we would thank you for our own quiet". The "indifferent poet"⁴ that was so distasteful to Longinus, found no kinder reception with Dryden.

As for diction, metre, etc., Dryden was quite well aware that they were at the root of the pleasure which literature gives. Words, which Longinus had called the light of thought, Dryden said were the colouring of the work; the design, the disposition, the manners, and the thoughts are all before words however, but, whenever "Any of

¹Dedication to State of Innocence.

²Preface to *Troilus and Cressida*.

³*Apology to the State of Innocence*.

⁴*Essay on Satire*.

these are wanting or imperfect, so much wants or is imperfect in the imitation of human life, which is in the very definition of a poem"¹. And again, in the Essay on Dramatic Poesy, he says, "Beautiful words add greatly to the effect;" and in the Preface to the State of Innocence; "Wit is a propriety of thoughts and words---or thoughts and words elegantly adapted to the subject." Dryden's attitude toward verbosity comes in in this connection also. It is interesting to note his criticism of Chaucer in this respect; he refers to him as the father of English poetry, and says,---"I hold him in the same degree of veneration as the Grecians held Homer, or the Romans Virgil.As he knew what to say, so he knew also when to leave off. One of our late great poets (Cawley) is sunk in his reputation, because he could never forgive any conceit that came his way, but swept, like a drag-net, great and small"².* This feeling of Dryden's that too flowery expressions reduced the effect, marred the "high seriousness" of poetry, might very easily have come from Longinus, though no direct reference is made to him. Passages like the following, however, seem without doubt, to have been inspired by the Treatise. In speaking of tragedy he says, "I do not discommend the lofty style in tragedy, which is naturally pompous and magnificant; but nothing

* Note; Longinus, Sect. III.

"While tumidity thus tends to over shoot the sublime, puerility is the direct opposite of all that is great; it is in every sense low and small spirited, and essentially a most ignoble fault;--Clearly it is a pedantic conceit, which over does itself and becomes fridid at the last".

¹Preface to the Fables.

²Preface to the Fables.

is truly sublime, that is not just and proper..... An injudicious poet who aims at loftiness runs easily into the swelling puffy style, because it looks like greatness. But, as in a room, contrived for state, the height of the roof should bear a proportion to the area; so in the heightenings of poetry, the strength and vehemence of figures should be suited to the occasion, the subject, and the persons. All beyond this is monstrous: it is out of nature..... Shakespeare distinguished not the blown puffy style, from true sublimity; but I may venture to maintain, that the fury of his fancy often transported him beyond the bonds of judgment, either incoining of new words and phrases, or racking words which were in use, into the violence of a catachresis. It is not that I would explode the use of metaphors from passion, for Longinus thinks them necessary to raise it; but to use them at every word, to say nothing without a metaphor, a simile, an image, or description, is I doubt, to smell a little too strongly of the buskin.¹ The play of Troilus and Cressida, Dryden compared to Shakespeare's much to his own advantage. When we compare these two plays, Dryden's does seem to gain superior force and beauty because of his calmer, more majestic style. His criticism of Shakespeare does not seem unwarranted when we look at two such passages as these, parallel speeches, taken first from Shakespeare, and then from Dryden.

Tro. "O Pandarus! I tell thee, Pandarus,-

When I do tell thee, there my hopes lie drown'd,

Reply not in how many fathoms deep

They lie entrench'd. I tell thee I am mad

¹Preface to Troilus and Cressida.

In Cressid's love; thou answer'st she is fair;
 Pourest in the open ulcer of my heart
 Her eyes, her hair, her cheek, her gait, her voice;
 Handlest in thy discourse, O, that her hand,
 In whose comparison all whites are ink,
 Writing their own reproach, to whose soft seizure
 The cygnets' down is harsh and spirit of sense
 Hard as the palm of ploughman.

This thou tellest me,
 As true thou tell'st me, when I say I love her;
 But, saying thus, instead of oil and balm,
 Thou lay'st in every gash that love hath given me
 The knife that made it".¹

Tro. "Oh Pandarus, when I tell thee I am mad
 In Cressid's love, thou answer'st she is fair;
 Praised her eyes, her stature, and her wit;
 But praising thus, instead of oil and balm,
 Thou lay'st, in every wound her love has given me
 The sword that made it".

It is not surprising that in the preface to *Troilus and Cressida*, Dryden has quoted this from Longinus, --"If the passions be artfully employed, the discourse becomes vehement and lofty; if otherwise, there is nothing more ridiculous than a great passion out of reason" A little further on he quotes Aeschylus, and speaks of him

¹Shakespeare: *Troilus and Cressida*, I. i. l. 48-64.

as one who "writ nothing in cold blood but was always in a rapture and fury with his audience; the inspiration was still upon him, he was ever tearing it from the tripos; or (to run off as madly as he does, from one similitude to another) he was always at high flood tide of passion, even in the dead ebb and lowest water mark of the scene.....The passions, as they are considered simply and in themselves, suffer violence when they are perpetually maintained at the same height; for what melody can be made on that instrument, all whose strings are screwed up at first to their utmost streach, and to the same sound?.....He who would raise the passions of a judicious audience, must be sure to take his hearers along with him; if they be in a calm 'tis in vain for him to be in a huff; he must move them by degrees, and kindle with them."¹

Dryden realized, with Longinus, how difficult it was to get just the right expression and words to convey the mood and passion; strong passions being particularly difficult to phrase with the right effect. "The turn of words", he says, "is sometimes a fault, and sometimes a beauty, as they are used properly or improperly; but in strong passions always to be shunned, because passions are serious, and will admit of no playing".²

¹Preface to Troilus and Cressida.

²Preface to Fables. See Longinus, Sect IX "Sublimity is the note which rings from a great mind. Thus it is that, without any utterance, a notion, unclothed and unsupported, often moves our wonder, because the very thought is great; the silence of Ajax in the book of the Lower World is great, and more sublime than any words."

Dryden always admires the fire and fervor of poetry; he praises Homer, as did Longinus, saying that he was "violent, impetuous, and full of fire--rapid in his thoughts and took all the liberties, both of numbers and of expression, which his language, and the age in which he lived allowed him".¹ And in comparing Virgil and Homer, he again brings out the same characteristic; saying "the one warms you by degrees, the other sets you on fire all at once and never intermits his heat. It is the same difference which Longinus makes betwixt the effects of eloquence in Demosthenes and Tully; one persuades, the other commands." That this eloquence that arouses passion was of highest importance to Dryden is proved by the many references that may be found concerning it. Other things are of minor importance in poetical composition. In one place we see again the influence of the French appearing, when he remarks upon Corneilles' judiciously saying that the poet is not obliged to expose to view all particular actions which conduce to the principal; he ought to select such of them to be seen which will appear to the greatest beauty, either by the magnificence of the show or the vehemence of passion.²

¹Preface to the Fables.

²Essay on Dramatic Poesy.

GENERAL INFLUENCE OF LONGINUS ON THE VARIOUS
TENDENCIES BETWEEN THE YEARS 1674 - 1700.

We know that the translation of Longinus by Boileau in 1674, was directly responsible for his enormous increase in popularity during the succeeding years, both in France and in England. The cordial reception given the Treatise by French critics caused it to be read and commented upon by Englishmen, who, perhaps, would never have recognized its full value had its prestige been less thoroughly established across the channel. It would appear, however, from a careful study of the literature of this period, that although Longinus was widely read and highly admired by many critics, his real influence on creative literature was slight. He was above the heads of the majority of the writers of the time. There are, however, traces of the Sublime, threads of gold, as it were, appearing from time to time in the coarser fabric of Restoration literature and criticism. As early as 1675, the year after the appearance of Boileau's translation, we find Edward Phillips speaking of poetry as a "Science certainly of all others the most noble and exalted, and not unworthily termed Divine, since the heights of poetical rapture hath ever been accounted little less than Divine Inspiration".¹ It must be remembered of course, that passages like this only show the possible influence of Longinus, since ideas of enthusiasm had been potent since the time of Casanbon. It is my effort to discover these various tendencies, which seem for the

¹Edward Phillips: Preface to *Theatrum Poeticum, or A Complete Collection of the Poets*, 1675. Spingarn, *Critical Essays of the Seventeenth Century*, Oxford, 1908. vol.II.

most part to have had little effect on Restoration literature, but which later became important factors in shaping 18th century criticism.

"That eminence and excellence of language," that "carries men out of themselves"¹ is a note that is sometimes sounded during these years. In 1684, we find Wentworth Dillon exclaiming,

"Mighty Marro! Kindle my breast with thy celestial flame,
Sublime ideas and apt words inspire."²

And Sir William Temple, in 1690, affirmed that "there is no question but true poetry may have the force to raise passions and to allay them, to temper joy and grief, to raise love and fear, nay, to turn fears into boldness and love into indifference and into hatred itself".³ Here, surely, he was admitting that poetry had the power to lift men out of themselves, even to the point of transport. The thought of transport quite naturally refers back to that of inspiration which comes from a divine source, and so it is that the idea that the poet must be inspired, must be really possessed by some force that is beyond mere human attainment, appears from time to time in this connection. This thought of a divine inspiration was of course the only thing that would endow the poet with the power of inspiring others, for,

"All in vain these superficial parts
Contribute to the structure of the whole

¹ Longinus, Sect. I.

² Earl of Roscommon: *Essay on Translated Verse*, 1684. Spingarn, II

³ Sir William Temple: *Of poetry*, 1690, Spingarn, vol. III.

Without a genius too, for that's the soul,--

A Spirit which inspires the work throughout,

As that of Nature moves the World about:

A heat that glows in every word that's writ,

That's something of Divine, and more than Wit.¹

In the year 1685, Robert Wolseley, in criticising Lord Rochester, used such terms as these:—"in glory, he has reached his most divine heights",--he possessed "unaffected greatness of mind,"--"all original, and has a stamp so particular, so unlike anything that has been writ before". Also, Wolseley goes on to refer to others who, in contrast to Rochester have "got the form of poetry without the power, and by a laborious insipidness, a polished dullness, seem not designed to 't as a diversion but condemn'd to 't as a Penance".² One passage in this preface seems so full of the spirit of Longinus in its insistence on sublimity, that I cannot forebear quoting it.

"True genius, like the Anima Mundi, which some of the Ancients believed, will enter into the hardest and dryest thing, enrich the most barren soil;.....nothing within the vast immensity of nature is so devoid of grace or so remote from sense but will obey the formings of this plastic heat and feel the operations of this vivifying power;.....this is a spirit that blows where it lists, and like the philosopher's stone, converts itself into whatsoever it touches,....and by a poetical Daemonianism passes it with

¹Robert Wolseley: Preface to Valentinian, 1885. Spingarn,
Vol III.

²Ibid.

the spirit of good sense and gracefulness, or who, as Horace says of Homer, can fetch light out of smoke, roses out of dunghills, and give a kind of life to the inanimate, by the force of that divine and supernatural Virtue which, if we will believe Ovid, is the gift of all who are truly Poets":¹. To emphasize still further, the divine nature of genius, Sir William Temple in 1690, referred to that "elevation of genius which can never be produced by any criticism or study, by pains or by industry, which cannot be taught by precepts or examples, and therefore is agreed by all to be the pure and free gift of Heaven or of nature, and to be a fire kindled out of some hidden spark of the very first conception".² That inspiration was always thought of as being of divine origin is clear from the fact that it is seldom if ever spoken of except in connection with a supernatural power.

Shaftesbury, when writing of enthusiasm, says that "inspiration is a real feeling of the Divine Presence, and enthusiasm a false one. But the passion they raise is much alike... Something there will be of extravagance and fury when the ideas or images received are too big for the narrow human vessel to contain, so that inspiration may be justly called divine enthusiasm; for the word itself signifies divine presence, and was made use of by the Philosophers, whom the earliest Christian Fathers called divine, to express whatsoever was sublime in human passions."³

¹Ibid.

²Sir William Temple: Of Poetry, 1690. Spingarn, vol.III.

³Shaftesbury's Characteristics: Essay on Enthusiasm, London, 1870, vol. I. For note concerning use of word enthusiasm in 17th century, see Robertson's edition. London, 1900, vol I.p.5. See also his introduction to vol.I on Shaftesbury.

During these years there was a general tendency to ridicule and destroy everything that tended toward extravagance. Critics and writers were afraid of enthusiasm, and consequently slow to accept the doctrine of inspiration. Such a belief tended too much in the direction of the unexplainable and fantastic.* We find reference of a very scornful nature made, to those who considered inspiration necessary for poetry. Remarks like the following often occurred. "Poets indeed, and especially those of a modern kind have a peculiar manner of treating this affair with a high hand. They pretend to set themselves above mankind, 'Their pens are sacred': 'Their style and utterance divine': They would disdain to be reminded of those poor elements of speech, their alphabet and grammer".¹ This tendency being so strongly active, it is the more remarkable that inspiration and enthusiasm were allowed to exist at all in literary criticism. The attitude of Sir William Davenant, expressed in 1650, was still active all during the latter part of the 17th century. He had said, "to such painful Poets some upbraid the want of extemporary fury, or rather inspiration; a dangerous word; which many have of late successfully used; and inspiration is a spiritual Fitt, deriv'd from the ancient Eth-erich Poets, who then as they were Priests, were Statesmen too,

* "The words 'enthusiasm' and 'enthusiast' normally carried in the 17th and 18th centuries the significance of 'fanaticism' and 'fanatic', especially of the emotionally demonstrative kind. Churchmen and Deists, alike disparaged all such manifestations". Shatesbury: Characteristics. London, 1900, vol. I. p. 7. note 1.

¹Quoted in Shaftesbury: Misc. Ref. II. 296.

and probably loved Dominican; and as their well dissembling of inspiration begot them reverence then, equal to that which was paid to honor; so these who now profess the same fury, may perhaps by such authentic example profess authority over the people, it being not unreasonable to imagine they rather imitate the Greek Poets than the Hebrew Prophets, since the latter were inspired for the use of others, and these, like the former, prophesy for themselves. But though the ancient Poets are excused, as knowing the weak constitution of those Deities, from whom they took their Priesthood, and the frequent necessity of dissembling for the ease of government, yet these.....should not assume such saucy familiarity with a true God.¹ From the idea that reverted back to the ancient power of prophecy, the opinion very naturally arose, that the poet's genius lay in something supernatural and uncanny. This of course, the more intelligent critics combated. In 1690 Sir William Temple said that it was generally accepted that writers were divine, caused by a Celestial fire or Divine Inspiration. Because of this, he says, some think that poetry is really a divine thing and can work charms. This, Temple points out, is an error; poetry has only the same power of influencing people that music or the other arts possess. He goes on to say that an account of fascination and enthusiasm from their natural causes would be of benefit to the public in general.² To explain away the suspicion, caused by the

¹Sir William Davenant: Preface to Gondibert. 1650 Spingarn,
²vol. III.

Sir William Temple: Of Poetry, 1690 Spingarn, vol.III.

popular idea that it was this supernatural power that produced the emotional effect, Temple says that such an effect lies quite within the possibilities of art. As for poetry being able to arouse emotion in the reader, it is quite possible, and gives as an instance the forsaken girl in one of Virgil's *Ecclogues*, for whom it would have been possible to bring back her lover, revive an old flame, or damp a new one by the power of her verse alone. "For there is no question," says Temple, "but true poetry may have the Force and raise Passions and allay them"¹. So also said John Sheffield; when discussing Shakespeare and Fletcher, he admitted,--

"For though in many things they grossly fail,
Over our passions still they so prevail,
That our own grief by theirs is rockt asleep,
The dull are forced to feel, the wise to weep".²

To admit at this time that the poet possessed an unexplained power that could move his readers, was important for future criticism. It later developed into the germ from which sprung the basic theory of impressionistic criticism. Dryden, alone at this early period, admitted that poetry might be judged by its effect on the individual and he dared to express this theory only with reservations. It was, however, as I have before observed, of the greatest importance that this idea of the unseen force of poetry be kept alive, and it is doubtless due to the influence of Longinus to a large extent that the ability to "carry men out of themselves",³ was valued.

¹Ibid.

²John Sheffield: *Essay upon Poetry*, 1682, Spingarn, vol. II.

³Longinus, Sect. I.

"Further", says Longinus, "nature is the original and vital underlying principle in all cases, but system can define limits and fitting reasons, and can also contribute the softest rules for use and practice."¹ This principle was often repeated and emphasized, perhaps more clearly and certainly accepted than any other one thing that Longinus stands for. We find nearly these same words introduced into criticism from time to time, by such writers as Robert Wolsely, J. Sheffield, John Vanbrugh, and George Granville.

"Words are the paint by which their thoughts are shown,
And Nature is their Object to be drawn;
The written picture we applaud or blame,
But as the just proportions are the same,
Who driven with ungovernable fire,
Or void of art, beyond these bonds aspire,
Gygantick forms and monstrous Births alone,
Produce, which Nature shockt disdains to own;
By true reflection I would see my face;
Why bring the fool a magnifying Glass?
But poetry in fiction takes delight,
And mounting up in figures out of sight,
Leaves Truth behind in her audacious flight;
Fables and Metaphors that always lie,
And rash Hyperboles, that soar so high,
And every Ornament of Verse, must die.

¹Longinus, Sect. II.

Mistake me not: No figures I exclude,
And but forbid Intemperance, not Food."¹

Nature, as opposed to that which dwelt with the unnatural and overstrained, appears to be material that Granville thought proper for poetry. Others held the same view. Robert Wolsely said in 1685, that wit, in his estimation, was nothing more or less than a true and lively expression of nature, but further than that, "this expression of nature must be that it gain our reason, and lively that it may affect our passions."² These lines followed close upon an expression of his acceptance of the prescriptions, as he calls them, of Aristotle, Longinus, and Horace, so we may know that he was, like most of the writers of the time, familiar with Longinus, and doubtless was influenced by him in his criticism.

Dryden comments upon Otway, a characteristic dramatist of the age, concerning the passions he portrays.--"I will not defend everything in his Venice Preserved", remarks Dryden, "but I must bear this testimony to his memory, that the passions are truly tricked in it, though there is some what to be desired, both in the grounds of them, and in the height and elegance of expression, but nature is there, which is the greater beauty". Johnson, also makes the same comment upon Otway, saying that he "conceived forcibly, and drew originally, by consulting nature in his own heart."³ It is true that he did "conceive forcible", and contin-

¹ George Granville: *Essay upon Unnatural Flights in Poetry* 1701. Spingarn, vol. III.

² Robert Wolsely: *Preface to Valentinian*, Spingarn, vol. III.

³ Life of Otway: by Dr. Johnson. *Works of the English Poets*, London, 1810, vol. 8 p. 279.

ually speaks of the poet's freedom in his prologues and epilogues. He would dispense with the rules entirely; and assumes a much bolder attitude, in general toward the restrictions of the time than was at all customary.

Wotton is rather more cautious than Otway, yet he is inclined to believe that natural genius is of more importance than art, though the two must go along together in fine poetry. "Genius", he says, "and judgment are necessary, as well as elevated language, which has in itself a great influence.¹ That such a belief was not merely an acceptance of general beliefs current at this time, but was probably due in part at least to Longinus, is shown a little further on, when Wotton speaks of "Demosthenes, Aristotle, Tully, Qumctilian, and Longinus", as among those whom should be studied by those who would write finely in prose. These ancients are studied, he says, out of curiosity; a statement that is significant, for we may find frequent reference made to Longinus and his Treatise on the Sublime, but very little real application of his principles during the years directly preceding the 18th century. Wotton also expressed for his time, the words of Longinus, "nature as a rule is free and independent in matters of passion and elevation".² Wotton says, "It is liberty alone which inspires men with lofty thoughts, and elevates their souls to a higher pitch than rules of art can direct. Books of Rhetoric make men capious and

¹Wotton: *Reflections*, 1694. Spingarn, vol. III

²Longinus, Sect.II

methodical; but they alone can never infuse that true enthusiastic rage which liberty breaths into their souls who enjoy it; and which, guided by a sedate judgment will carry men further than the greatest industry and the quickest parts can go without it".¹ And Otway too, appeared to hold this idea that freedom and elevation go together. Of Shakespeare he wisely says, "he wrote with fancy unconfined, And thoughts that were immortal as his mind".² Criticism of this nature, during this period, is rarely found. It is perhaps, more due to Otway's own genius than to any external influence, that we find lines like these occurring in his work. To use his own words,--

"The poet led abroad his mourning Muse,
 And let her range, to see what sport she'd choose.
 Straight, like a bird got loose, and on the wing,
 Pleased with her freedom, she began to sing;
 Each note was echo'd all the vale along,
 And this was what she uttered in her song".³

What she uttered, was a dissertation against the wits of the day, who believed that their standards and learning were sufficient to judge all things. He himself assumed a high scorn for them, with what he would call a "true poet's fearless rage",⁴ and looks forward to the time when,

¹Wotton: *Reflections*, Spingarn, vol. III.

²Prologue to *History and Fall of Caius Marius*, London, 1812. vol. II. p. 219.

³Epilogue to *the Soldier's Fortune*. vol. I. p. 477.

⁴See Prologue to *the History and Fall of Caius Marius*.

"You, critics: shall forget your natural spite,
 And poets with unbounded fancy write:
 E'en this day's poet shall be altered quite.
 His thoughts more loftily and freely flow;
 And he himself, whilst you his verse allow,
 As much transported as he's humbled now".¹

The general feeling concerning the much discussed rules must have been affected by the expressions of approval toward freedom in writing and the disregard of pedantic critics. Sir William Temple takes an extremely romantic attitude toward the rules. He speaks of "that elevation of genius which can never be produced by any art or study, by pains or by industry, which cannot be taught by precepts or examples, and therefore is agreed by all to be the pure and free gift of heaven or of nature, and to be a fire kindled out of some hidden spark of the very first conception." "No other art," continues Temple, "requires so much genius, judgment, and application; but as far as the rules are concerned, he thinks there has been too much said about them.

"The truth is,"² he remarks, "there is something in the Genius of Poetry too Libertine to be confined to so many rules; and whosoever goes about to subject it to such constraints loses both its spirit and grace which are ever native and never learnt, even of the best masters. 'Tis as if to make excellent Honey, you should cut off the wings of your Bees, confine them to their Hives or their Stands, and lay flowers before them, such as you think

¹Ibid.

²Sir William Temple: Of Poetry, 1690, Spingarn, vol. III.
 p. 73.

the sweetest and like to yield the finest Extraction; you had as good pull out their stings, and make arrant Drones of them. They must range through Fields as well as Gardens and choose such flowers as they please".¹ The rules, after all, were only able to save some men from being very bad poets; not to make any man a very good one. On the whole, however, aside from these points of elevation to which no rule could apply, nor any industry attain, Temple considered the rules necessary to restrain the erratic flights and too violent attempts of poetasters. John Dennis, likewise, held to this idea, that it was the poetical genius that gave "the power of expressing passion worthily"². "Yet 'tis Art, that makes a subject very great, and consequently gives occasion for a great genius to show itself."³

To pass now to the fault of puerility, which is "in every sense low and small spirited". (Sect. III) As the straining after high-flown and artificial effects in religious literature was condemned, so was it also in poetry and drama. Longinus had spoken of puerility as a "pedantic conceit, which overdoes itself and becomes frigid at the last". "Authors", he says, "glide into this when they make for what is unusual, artificial, above all, agreeable, and so run on the reefs of nonsense and affectation".⁴ And Sir William Temple attacked conceits strongly, saying that this Vein first over-flowed our modern Poetry, and with so little Distinction or Judgment that we would have conceit as well as Rhyme

¹ Ibid.

² Dennis: *Advancement and Reformation*, London, 1701.

³ Dennis: *Remarks on Prince Arthur*, London, 1696.

⁴ Longinus, Sect. III.

in every two lines, and run through all our long Scribbles as well as the short, and the whole Body of the Poem, whatever it is. This was just as if a Building should be nothing but ornament, or clothes nothing but trimming; as if a face should be covered over with black patches, or a gown with spangles;"¹ The Duke of Milgravé's Essay upon Poetry was directed against the 'sheer wit' of Restoration comedy and the 'noisy nonsense' of the heroic plays, and all straining after an artificial effect, as well as the "passion out of place and unmeaning, where there is no call for passion, or unrestrained where restraint is needed."² Dryden criticised Shakespeare severely as already noted, for this fault of bombast and artificial effect, in his preface to *Troilus and Cressida*, and in many other places as well, expresses his preference for reserve and moderation, feeling that strong passion ought not to be attempted upon light matters, or high sounding phrases used to express trivial thoughts. Such an attitude cannot be said to be entirely due to Longinus, but was doubtless very much strengthened by his authority.

There is another aspect of Longinus's influence, about which we can only conjecture. That is, the part he played in raising the ethical and aesthetic standards of literature. It is impossible to say how far his influence might have gone, toward turning the public taste toward better and more noble subjects, but it is most probable, that those men who read and admired the Treatise

¹Sir William Temple: Of Poetry, Spingarn, vol. III.
²Longinus: Sect. III.

on the Sublime were affected by such lines as these,--"the truly eloquent must be free from low and ignoble thoughts. For it is not possible that men with mean and servile ideas and aims prevailing throughout their lives should produce anything that is admirable and worthy of immortality".¹ Criticism, during the later years of the 17th century, was forced to take up the controversy against the license and immorality of the stage. The culmination of which came in Collier's Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English stage, published in 1698. The number of disapproving voices that were raised against Restoration comedy before Collier's are many, and among them, those of such men as Evelyn,² Flecknoe,³ Wright,⁴ Vanburgh,⁵ and Blackmore⁶. But even aside from the stage controversy, there was growing up a theory of poetry in which obscenity could find no place. All excesses, either of morals or imagination could not exist according to the new standards. We find Thomas Blount, in his De Re Poetica, stating it as his view as well as that of many others, that a poet may write upon love, but not upon obscenity.⁷ Passages are quoted from Cowley, Boileau, and Rapijn as authority. Robery Wolsey also has a most interesting discussion on poetry and its relation to morals in his preface to the Valentinian, in 1685. I have only briefly suggested the reaction

¹Longinus, Sect. IX.

²Memoirs, ed. Bray, 1827, IV. 135.

³Lohr, Richard Flecknoe, 1905, pp/38,98,103.

⁴Country Conversations, 1694, 1.

⁵Relapse, II. 1.

⁶Preface to Prince Arthur, and King Arthur, 1697.

⁷Remarks on Poetry: London, 1694, p. 21.

that took place at this time against the earlier Restoration license, but it was a movement that steadily developed in the succeeding years, and I believe we may feel certain that the pure and elevated inspiration of Longinus had a tremendous influence toward aiding and strengthening its effect.

CONCLUSION.

The exact results, of an investigation such as this, are hard to determine. Certain indications can only be noted and tendencies suggested. It remains a fact beyond dispute, however, that by the early years of the 18th century, Longinus had come to be accepted as a well-known and undisputed authority. This necessarily implies a certain amount of previous influence of a fundamental nature. The Treatise on the Sublime had not been taken up as a passing vogue and allowed to sink again into oblivion. It had made a lasting impression upon the tendencies that were to direct 18th century literature.¹ We all know how Addison's criticism was colored by Longinus, his chapters on Milton especially, and that Akenside's Pleasures of the Imagination appear to be almost a paraphrase of the 35th section of the Sublime.^{*} Prof. Collins, in his Essay on Longinus and Greek Criticism, has a particularly good, brief account of the influence of the Treatise during this period.

But to return to a summary of the chief points mentioned in this paper. We saw, that of the five sources of elevated language that Longinus gives, that of vehement and inspired passion, made the greatest impression on the critics. We find frequent reference to it in connection with the idea that passion or strong emotion raises images in the mind of the poet, which he in turn, arouses

*The opinion of Bishop Hurd, concerning Addison and Longinus, is interesting in this connection. In his estimation these two men with Bonhours constituted the three greatest critics of the age. (Works: London, 1811, vol. I, p. 394)

¹For a further discussion of this point, see Passages translated from Bishop Lowth's Oxford Lectures on Hebrew Poetry, reprinted in Longinus on the Sublime, Oxford, 1906. p. 114.

in his readers through the power of his verse. Longinus had given as one of the sources of this elevation "the due formation of figures,.....first those of thought and secondly those of expression"¹ Now figures of thought corresponds pretty closely to our conception of imagination, although during the 17th century imagination was a term used only with the greater care. Hobbe's theory, that the mind could only call up images experienced in the past, and consequently somewhat dimmed by time, was about the only explanation made concerning imagination. There were poets, and among them some critics, who seemed, however, to possess a deeper insight into the workings of imagination, and its place in creative literature. Sir William Temple, who in many respects foreshadowed the later school of Romanticism, expresses quite boldly his belief in the imaginative power of a poet. He introduces the matter by saying that the word poet signified in Greek a maker or creator, "such as raise admirable Frames and Fabricks out of nothing, which strike with wonder and with pleasure the Eyes and Imagination of those who behold them.....Whoever does not affect and move the same present Passions in you that he represents in others, and at other times raise Images about you , as a Conjurer is said to do Spirits, Transport you to the places and to the Persons he describes, cannot be judged to be a Poet."² Temple presupposes an imagination that is active both in the poet and the reader; Shaftesbury mentions only

¹Longinus, Sect. VIII.

²Sir William Temple: Of Poetry. Spingarn, vol. III.

the imagination necessary for the poet. "No poet", he says, "can do anything great in his own way without the imagination or supposition of a divine presence which may raise him to some degree of the passion we are speaking of".¹

That passion was one of the essentials of an elevated style, both Longinus and the 17th century critics, agreed; that this passion and enthusiasm, or, as some called it, inspiration; that this inspiration and passion might only be directed, not controlled by art, was another point upon which there was no dispute; and last but not least, there were those who admitted that the direct effect of poetry upon the reader was the criterion of its value. This was the basis of judgment adopted by the school of taste. The attack upon those critics who looked only for faults, was also instigated by the school of taste, and criticism of the appreciative and interpretive sort called for. The translation of Longinus in 1674 did much to assist the attack on the criticism of faults, and help in the appreciation of Genius.² The claims of charm and power, rather than those of regularity and imitation, came to be understood and looked for. It was a movement that changed the nature and scope of criticism completely; and we may, I think, feel certain, that the spirit and influence of Longinus had a wonderful effect in broadening and intensifying its principles. An influence of this sort cannot be seen in so many direct quotations, nor proved by so many statements, it can only be accepted as one of the most powerful

¹Shaftesbury: I. 36.

²Longinus, Sect. XXXIII.

elements existing during those years, that, as if in proof of its own sublimity, tended to "lift men out of themselves" and inspire them in such a way that they felt that they themselves had, produced what they had heard.¹ This, I think, is in truth the secret of the Sublime. Without being conscious of it, men responded to its influence. It formed the leaven, that a few years later in the 18th century, was to expand the idea of poetry into an infinitely higher conception than any that had previously existed in Englend. Perhaps, although the visible indications are rather meagre, and no one man except Dryden allowed the influence of the Sublime to permeate his thought, we may say that its greatest work was accomplished during this earlier time, when it was becoming widely known, when here and there men were waking up to the fact that it was the work of genius, and that it lifted poetry to a level where the chizel and the file were mere tools of construction and not creators.

¹Longinus, Sect. VII.

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*Prof. Rhys Roberts has a most excellent bibliography of editions and translations of Longinus, with a list of the critical works that have appeared on the subject.





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